

TRICARE PACIFIC LEAD AGENCY DENTAL PROGRAM

Active Duty Personnel in WESTPAC Remote Locations

General Benefit Information

TRICARE Pacific Lead Agency (TPLA) is the centralized Tri-Service case management office for dental care in WESTPAC. All pre-authorizations for care come from this office.

International SOS (SOS) is contracted by TPLA to coordinate dental care for active duty service members. This will include locating proper dental care, arranging appointments, assisting in obtaining pre-treatment estimates, and payment for services directly to the dentist.

SOS, in cooperation with TPLA, maintains a referral list of overseas dentists and ***all dental care must be obtained from one of these participating dentists*** (exception for emergency care).

For all procedures appropriately pre-authorized, there is ***no deductible or co-payment*** required of the service member.

Service members and their units share responsibility with the active duty military dental facilities for maintaining dental readiness. Military exams and needed dental care are expected to be kept up-to-date as part of this requirement.

Eligibility

Active Duty Service Members (ADSMs) assigned to countries in the Pacific that do not have a full time military dental treatment facility (DTF) are considered to be in remote countries and are eligible for the provisions of the TRICARE Pacific Lead Agency Dental Program.

Eligibility for Reserve components and ROTC students is limited to specifically approved treatment of service- connected injuries only. Further guidance should be obtained from the Reserve unit or National Guard medical representative.

Active duty military personnel TDY/TAD, deployed, on leave or traveling in WESTPAC are covered for emergency treatment only.

Emergency Dental Care

Definition – the immediate treatment necessary to relieve pain, treat infection, control hemorrhage or prevent significant loss of tooth structure, to include temporary or permanent fillings, root canal treatment, extractions, or other immediate treatment.

Examples:

- root canal therapy required to relieve pain or treat infection can be completed without pre-authorization, but the subsequent placement of a crown, if indicated, would require pre-authorization.
- if an anterior tooth fractures or a posterior tooth suffers a cuspal fracture, the tooth should be restored with a direct filling material to cover any exposed dentin and provide temporary treatment while written pre-authorization is obtained for a crown (if indicated).
- if a posterior tooth suffers a central groove fracture, a temporary crown should be placed to stabilize the crack and allow follow up evaluation for possible root canal therapy while awaiting written pre-authorization for a crown
- if a service member has an acute condition involving one impacted tooth requiring a surgical extraction, extraction of that tooth can be completed without written preauthorization, however extraction of other non-emergent teeth requiring the same treatment should be delayed until written authorization is obtained.

Procedure - ADSM should contact International SOS for assistance. If necessary, ADSM may seek emergency dental care from any licensed dentist, without the need for preauthorization.

Routine Dental Care

Definition – treatment that meets all of the following requirements:

- Care includes diagnostic services (exams and X-rays), preventive procedures (cleanings and temporary fillings), routine restorations (amalgam or composite fillings), simple root canal treatments or single tooth extractions.
- The total cost of the procedure or treatment appointment must ***be less than \$500.***
- The treatment plan must ***not exceed a total of \$1,500 per calendar year***, even if each of the procedures or treatment appointments is less than \$500.
- The procedure must be a ***covered benefit***. (See the section on covered and noncovered procedures.)

Procedure – ADSM should contact International SOS prior to seeking care. Routine dental treatment does not require pre-authorization from TPLA.

Specialty Dental Care

Definition – includes prosthodontics (crowns and bridges), periodontics (gum surgery), oral surgery (multiple extractions), endodontics (root canal) and other dental treatment not considered emergency or routine.

Procedure - ADSM should contact International SOS prior to seeking care. All specialty care ***requires written pre-authorization from TPLA***, regardless of the cost. Initiating specialty care without written pre-authorization from TPLA may result in the service member being responsible for part or all cost of treatment.

Note: All ADSM in Singapore must first seek care by the staff dentist at the Medical Aid Station and all ADSM in Bangkok must first seek care by the contract dentist at JUSMAGTHAI prior to any referral to a local dentist. Contact SOS if either provider is not available.

Covered Procedures

All procedures or treatments must meet the requirements of being ***appropriate*** and ***necessary*** to establish and maintain dental health to meet ***worldwide readiness***/ deployment status. Treatment that will negatively impact worldwide readiness or deployability will not be authorized.

In most cases, the TPLA will pay the usual and customary fee the dental provider charges private-pay patients. The U.S. government reserves the right to establish a maximum allowance for any given procedure.

Diagnostic Services:

- Examinations and radiographs are covered as needed to effectively diagnosis and develop appropriate treatment plans. ***Two routine examinations per year*** are covered.
- Limited oral evaluations - problem focused; only covered when performed on an emergency basis.
- Additional examinations for specialty evaluations for covered procedures are authorized one per specialty per year. Note: Orthodontic and implant evaluations and related services are not covered.

Preventive Services:

- ***Two routine prophylaxes (cleanings)*** are covered per year to establish and maintain dental health.
- If additional prophylaxes are indicated to control periodontal disease, the additional prophylaxes require pre-authorization.
- Sealants also require pre-authorization and the justification must be provided in the pre-authorization request.

Restorative Services:

- Amalgam and composite resin restorations do not require pre-authorization, provided they meet the financial limitations for routine care previously described. Multiple restorations performed on a single tooth will be paid as a single restoration reflecting the number of surfaces involved
- Covered procedures also include preformed or cast posts (as appropriate), core build-ups, cast gold crowns, and porcelain-fused-to-metal crowns. Cast posts are limited to root canal treated anterior teeth. Preformed posts may be used in both anterior and posterior root canal treated teeth. All of these procedures require pre-authorization.

- Substitution of a non-covered procedure for a covered procedure is not allowed. For instance: An all-ceramic crown may not be substituted for a PFM even if the cost is equal to, or less than the cost of the authorized PFM crown. An exception would be the substitution of a direct restorative material for an authorized indirect restoration, but the billing will reflect the procedure actually provided in procedure code, description of code, and fee.

Endodontic Services:

- Covered procedures include: pulpotomy (for emergency treatment when provided by a dentist not completing the root canal therapy), root canal therapy and endodontic surgery.
- Non-emergency endodontic treatment and surgery requires pre-authorization.

Periodontal Services:

- Covered services include: periodontal prophylaxis, scaling and root planning and periodontal surgery.
- Surgical procedures such as gingival curettage, gingivectomy or gingivoplasty, crown lengthening, grafting (both soft and hard tissue), and guided tissue regeneration require pre-authorization.

Oral Surgery Services:

- Covered procedures include: extractions (routine, surgical, and impacted), tooth reimplantation and/or stabilization, alveoloplasty, and surgical treatment of abscesses.
- Analgesia, sedation, and general anesthesia are covered when used in conjunction with surgical procedures but written pre-authorization must be obtained unless the surgical procedure is for treatment of an emergent condition.

Prosthodontics:

- Covered services include complete and partial dentures, and fixed bridges. Cast gold and porcelain-fused-to-metal are the only materials/techniques currently authorized.
- All prosthodontic procedures require pre-authorization (with the exception of repairs to, or recementation of, existing prosthesis).
- All metal restorations are recommended in areas that are not an esthetic concern or where conservation of sound natural tooth structure is indicated.

What is Not Covered?

- Experimental drugs or procedures
- Medications not prescribed in writing by an authorized health care provider
- Over-the-counter prescriptions,
- Supplies for home use (toothbrushes, mouth rinses) even if recommended by the dentist
- Plaque control program, oral hygiene, and dietary instructions
- Sealants for adult patients, unless pre-authorized
- Cosmetic treatment (bleaching, bonding, porcelain veneers, etc.)
- Porcelain or composite resin inlays/onlays, and gold foil restorations
- Composite resin or all-porcelain full or partial coverage crowns
- Civilian orthodontic treatment (braces). Exceptions may be made in unusual circumstances.
- Implants and related procedures and elective procedures

- Treatment to correct a pre-existing condition (such as a missing tooth, serviceable prosthodontic restorations or a malocclusion) that is not presenting as an acute condition, nor is likely to create an acute condition, or is not immediately needed to meet occupational requirements or world-wide dental readiness status may be recommended to be delayed until the service member is able to receive this care at an active duty dental treatment facility.
- Nitrous oxide analgesia, intravenous sedation, and general anesthesia in conjunction with routine operative or preventive procedures. Exceptions may be made in unusual circumstances. Authorization for payment or reimbursement of analgesia, used in conjunction with routine operative or preventive procedures will not be granted after-the fact.
- Separate charges for local anesthesia, infection control, bases, liners, indirect pulp cap, diagnostic casts, temporary crowns, photographs, etc., are considered integral to the parent (original and main) procedure, and will not be paid or reimbursed as an additional fee. Nor will these be charged to the service member.
- Charges for failure to keep a scheduled appointment, transportation costs related to outpatient treatment or charges for completion of a claim form are not covered.

What Requires Pre-authorization?

- Extensive routine dental care exceeding \$500 per episode or \$1500 per year or any procedure that does not fit the definition of emergency or routine dental care as previously described to include:
 - Surgical extractions of non-emergent impacted third molars (wisdom teeth) and any special surgery care to include non-emergent periodontal and endodontic surgery.
 - All crowns, bridges, complete and partial dentures, and other prosthodontic procedures,
 - Nitrous oxide analgesia, intravenous sedation, and general anesthesia in conjunction with non-emergency dental treatment.

Procedure for Requesting Dental Pre-Authorization

The service member or provider must contact SOS and submit the required items that will be forwarded to TPLA for review:

1. A completed AD Military Claim Form
2. A treatment plan from the dental provider indicating (as appropriate) tooth number, diagnosis, description of proposed procedure, and an itemized fee for each procedure.
3. Personal information concerning current assignment (date arrived, tour length, expected PCS/PCA date, etc)
4. Appropriate current diagnostic-quality radiographs. All requests for crowns should include both bitewing and periapical radiographs. All requests for bridges, partials and dentures should include current full mouth radiographs or panoramic x-ray documenting all missing and remaining teeth and appropriate diagnostic-quality periapical radiographs of the proposed abutment teeth identified in the treatment plan.
5. Any additional information (photographs, narrative justification, dates of previous treatment) that may be useful to justify the need for the requested treatment.

All of the information should be forwarded to International SOS. In most cases the treating provider will forward the information to SOS.

The TPLA return correspondence will provide clear authorization or denial of the requested treatment. All denials will be supplied a reason and possibly a recommended alternative treatment.

TPLA's pre-authorization determination is made exclusively on the documentation provided so clarity and completeness of the request is critical. Dental x-rays (and photographs) will be returned.

The service member's failure to contact SOS and obtain required pre-authorizations from TPLA might result in personal financial liability. When in doubt about pre-authorization requirements, service members should contact International SOS or TPLA.

For extensive or questionable treatment plans, evaluation at an active duty dental treatment facility may be required before an authorization or denial for treatment is made.

Procedure for Filing Claims

Claims should be submitted within 90 days of date of service.

Send a completed Active Duty Dental Claim Form identifying (as appropriate) the tooth number, description of procedure, date of service, and itemized cost of each procedure to SOS.

Upon receipt of complete claim information, SOS will process the claim, arrange payment directly to the provider and recover costs from TPLA.

Appeal Process

If TPLA denies a claim or pre-authorization approval, SOS will be notified promptly. The member may mail or send a facsimile letter with additional information as part of an appeal. Appeals must be made in the following sequence:

- Level I: Chief Dental Programs and Services, TRICARE Pacific Lead Agency, 1 Jarrett White Road (MCHK-TPLA, Tripler AMC, HI 96859-5000. FAX: DSN 433-3371.
- Level II: Executive Director TPLA. TRICARE Pacific Lead Agency, 1 Jarrett White Road (MCHK-TPSO, Tripler AMC, HI 96859-5000. FAX: DSN 433-3371.

Contact Information

The TPLA Web Page can be found at <http://tricare-pac.tamc.amedd.army.mil>

An SOS Customer Service representative may be contacted at any time at Singapore 65 6338 9277 (see your TRICARE POC for local SOS phone number).

c. The Chief, Dental Programs and Services of TPLA may be contacted by phone at (808) 433-3687 / DSN 433-3687 or email: TPLA.Dental@haw.tamc.amedd.army.mil